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Peacebuilding Commission

Second session
Guinea-Bissau configuration

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 21 January 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Viotti ..... (Brazil)

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08-21239 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (PBC/2/GNB/2)

1. **The Chairperson** said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Commission wished to hold open meetings under the Guinea-Bissau configuration.

2. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of the agenda

3. *The agenda was adopted.*

Additional members of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration

4. **The Chairperson**, recalled that, by letter of 14 January 2008, the Chairperson of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission had transmitted to the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration a list of prospective additional participant States and regional, subregional and international organizations. Having received written confirmation of interest from all those States and organizations, she took it that the members agreed to invite them to attend meetings of the configuration.

5. *It was so decided.*

6. **The Chairperson** said that, as the Chairperson of the Organizational Committee had subsequently informed her of other expressions of interest in joining the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration, specifically from Burkina Faso, the members of the configuration should determine their position on the matter and transmit to the Organizational Committee a formal recommendation to add further participants.

7. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) suggested that the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration should simply add Burkina Faso to the list of proposed additional participants before approving it.

8. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) said that his delegation favoured approval of the list of participants received from the Chairperson of the Organizational Committee, with the addition of Burkina Faso, which was currently a member of the Security Council and Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

9. **The Chairperson** said she would take it that the members of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration wished to recommend to the Organizational Committee that the States on the list of additional participants proposed by its Chairman, and, in addition, Burkina Faso, should be invited to take part in meetings of the configuration.

10. *It was so decided.*

Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau

Indicative workplan

11. **The Chairperson** indicated that peacebuilding was a complex undertaking which must simultaneously address issues including political stability, security, capacity-building for institutions and economic development. In order to fulfil the mandate established by the Security Council, the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration should assign priorities to the tasks before it. Those priorities should reflect the wishes and needs of the Government and people of Guinea-Bissau, so that ownership by the recipient country became a guiding principle.

12. She suggested that the country-specific configuration should take a two-track approach, combining a longer-term peacebuilding strategy with quick-impact projects which produced an immediate effect on the daily lives of the population. The two-track approach was in line with the recommendations communicated to the Peacebuilding Commission by the Minister of Defence of Guinea-Bissau, on behalf of his Government, during a recent videoconference marking the inclusion of that country in the Peacebuilding Commission agenda.

13. The Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration, like the Burundi and Sierra Leone configurations, should prove that it could add value to the efforts of other partners and donors, rather than becoming one more actor complicating the situation on the ground. Accordingly, the Peacebuilding Support Office was currently engaged in a mapping exercise to produce an inventory of activities already under way in the country. The resulting inventory would be an important planning tool for the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration. Thereafter, efforts should also concentrate on mobilizing resources, working with traditional and non-traditional donors and the Bretton Woods institutions.

14. The country-specific configuration, using as a basis the information paper due to be drawn up following the Chairperson's planned field visit to Guinea-Bissau, information from local authorities and its own thematic discussions in New York, should formulate its advice to the Security Council, keeping in mind the latter's wish that peacebuilding efforts for Guinea-Bissau should begin within 90 days of the date on which the item first appears on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, in other words, by the end of March 2008. Simultaneously, the country-specific configuration should work on an integrated peacebuilding strategy for Guinea-Bissau, aiming to have it completed by the end of May 2008. In June 2008, the country-specific configuration should move on to examining ways to assess progress in the implementation of that integrated strategy.

15. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that his delegation supported the suggested two-track approach and the emphasis on added value. Care should be taken to preserve the respective roles of the country-specific configuration and the Organizational Committee in the peacebuilding process. Emphasizing the importance of quick-impact projects, he expressed the hope that past concerns regarding timely disbursement of resources for those projects would be addressed.

16. Recalling that priorities for action were to be established on the basis of the needs and wishes of the Government and people of Guinea-Bissau, he expressed his delegation's discomfort with a specific deadline for the formulation of advice for the Security Council.

17. **Mr. Hoscheit** (Luxembourg) said that the Chairperson's emphasis on timely action was appropriate, coinciding with the message conveyed by the Minister of Defence of Guinea-Bissau. In the same vein, his delegation supported the use of quick-impact projects as a means of demonstrating the dividends of peace in a situation which remained fragile. The accumulated past experience of such projects in peacekeeping operations should be exploited to ensure that they did not have undesirable consequences of any kind. In other words, they should be viewed as part of the development continuum which the peacebuilding process sought to create.

18. **Mr. Takasu** (Japan) said that the successful Peacebuilding Commission retreat over the weekend of 19 and 20 January 2008 had determined common policies, commitments and goals which should be reflected in the work of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration.

19. As the people of Guinea-Bissau had high expectations of the Peacebuilding Commission, it must produce rapid, tangible results, beginning with the Chairperson's visit to the country. However, the nature and mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund must be kept in mind, and peacebuilding efforts should be kept realistic and place priority on the wishes of affected countries' Governments and people.

20. Guinea-Bissau should be encouraged to take ownership and primary responsibility for the peacebuilding process and to establish focal points to liaise with the Peacebuilding Commission. Account should be taken of past experience in Burundi and Sierra Leone and the potential of non-traditional donors, including the African Development Bank, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), the European Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, should be exploited.

21. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that past experience should indeed shape the activities of the Organizational Committee and country-specific configurations. His delegation agreed with the two-track approach suggested by the Chairperson, and looked forward to the results of the Peacebuilding Support Office mapping exercise as a useful basis for devising an integrated peacebuilding strategy and mobilizing the necessary resources.

22. It supported the forthcoming field visit by the Chairperson, and trusted that the Government of Guinea-Bissau would provide written details of its own priorities, in the same way that the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone had presented their priorities to the relevant country-specific configurations. Institutionally, the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations should play a central role in ensuring that Government and other authorities expressed a coherent view.

23. His delegation was well aware that only the Peacebuilding Support Office had financial provision for travel. That lack of resources particularly affected the Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations; perhaps approaches should be made in that regard to the Fifth Committee at its resumed sixty-second session.

24. **The Chairperson** said that she wished to reiterate that her forthcoming visit would be an exploratory one and would in no way supplant the direct communication of needs by the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and their representatives in New York.

25. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that his delegation appreciated the commitment of the Chairperson and her country to promoting stability, progress and development in Africa in general and Guinea-Bissau in particular. His own country wished to see Guinea-Bissau on the path to development and emerging from the crisis in which it found itself. Its past efforts had suffered from a lack of international support, but the Peacebuilding Commission had a unique opportunity to improve the situation on the ground on the basis of the guidance provided by the Security Council, the suggestions of the Chairperson and past experience in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

26. In addition, Guinea-Bissau itself must have ownership of the peacebuilding process. Accordingly, institutional support should be provided to ensure that the national authorities and their representatives in New York were able to formulate and put forward cohesive and coordinated proposals for action. His delegation hoped that the Chairperson's forthcoming field visit and the paper to be submitted by the Government of Guinea-Bissau would contribute to the rapid establishment of an integrated peacebuilding strategy.

27. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana), recalling that the Chairperson's country and his own had previously worked with ECOWAS, CPLP, the United Nations and other members of the international community to establish a contact group on Guinea-Bissau, said that the Security Council had referred the situation in that country to the Peacebuilding Commission with a flexible mandate, leaving room for the Peacebuilding Commission to share its own views, particularly after establishing priorities for action together with the national authorities.

28. That constructive approach would enhance collaboration between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, contributing to the success of the present country-specific configuration and resulting in benefits to other countries in post-conflict situations which wished to be placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

29. The Government of Guinea-Bissau had taken action to prepare for legislative elections, to pursue reconciliation and to restore its credibility, particularly by combating drug trafficking. Consulting the population of Guinea-Bissau on the peacebuilding process would help to consolidate political stability through quick-impact projects and other means. Finally, his delegation wished to suggest that the African Union Peace and Security Council should be informed of the proposed peacebuilding measures, in the light of its policy framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD), which sought to prevent countries from degenerating into conflict by addressing its root causes and promoting sustainable peace and development.

30. **Mr. Antonio** (Angola) said that his delegation wished to confirm its support for the two-track approach suggested by the Chairperson, as it took account of the country's specific situation and of the need to avoid adding one more actor to those already present on the ground. His delegation agreed with the representative of Jamaica about the wisdom of applying a deadline for providing advice to the Security Council. The needs expressed by Guinea-Bissau should be paramount.

31. **Ms. Stiglic** (European Community), recalling that the European Union had undertaken activities in Guinea-Bissau which included assisting with security sector reform, combating drug trafficking, training initiatives and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, said that it would work closely with the Peacebuilding Commission to achieve synergy on the ground. Her delegation supported the conclusions of the recent Peacebuilding Commission retreat and the approach suggested by the Chairperson, and looked forward to hearing the findings of the forthcoming field visit to Guinea-Bissau.

32. **Ms. Ratsifandrihamana** (African Union) said that she supported the proposal for the Chairperson to visit Guinea-Bissau and agreed that the international community should devote its full attention to the urgent needs of that country's people. The African Union stood ready to work closely with the Peacebuilding Commission and it attached a high priority to the shared responsibility of maintaining peace and security on the African continent. In that connection, it might be useful to apply the African Union framework document on post-conflict reconstruction and development to the Guinea-Bissau

configuration. She also recalled that the African Union had established a ministerial committee on post-conflict reconstruction and development, which would lead the implementation of African Union post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction activities in general.

33. **Mr. Salgueiro** (Portugal) noted that his Government had actively supported the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda and drew attention to Portugal's ongoing cooperation programmes with Guinea-Bissau. In the course of the Chairperson's visit to that country, she should discuss with the relevant authorities how the Peacebuilding Commission could best contribute to current national and international efforts. She could then provide useful recommendations to improve the coordination of all relevant stakeholders. The Peacebuilding Commission should align its priorities with those of the Government of Guinea-Bissau in order to ensure the collective success of its operations and to avoid any duplication of effort. His delegation fully supported the two-track approach adopted by the Chairperson and looked forward to hearing the findings of her visit upon her return.

34. **Mr. De Palacio España** (Spain) drew attention to his country's individual cooperation activities with Guinea-Bissau aimed at developing bilateral and multilateral efforts to combat poverty and attain the Millennium Development Goals in that country. He stressed that his Government attached special importance to gender issues in the context of peacebuilding. It therefore particularly looked forward to discussing such issues with the Government of Guinea-Bissau in the future.

35. **Ms. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador) suggested that the Chairperson and the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau should provide relevant information about the Peacebuilding Commission's activities in Guinea-Bissau both to the Working Group on Lessons Learned and to countries of the Organization of American States (OAS).

36. **Ms. McAuliffe** (International Monetary Fund) agreed that peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau would require a concerted effort among all of that country's traditional and non-traditional partners. For its part, the Fund had recently reached an agreement with the authorities in Guinea-Bissau on emergency post-conflict assistance for 2008, which would be discussed by the Fund's Executive Board in the coming weeks. The Fund commended the Peacebuilding Commission for its efforts in Guinea-Bissau and looked forward to cooperating with it further in the future.

37. **Mr. Abani** (Niger) said that the Peacebuilding Commission should capitalize on its successful experience in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The institutional problems of Guinea-Bissau were well known and were related to a lack of infrastructure and of peace and security. He welcomed the Chairperson's decision to visit that country and expressed his Government's readiness to provide any necessary assistance in that respect. Finally, he stressed that the Commission should work closely with ECOWAS, the African Union and the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau with respect to its work in Guinea-Bissau.

38. **Mr. Jarra** (Gambia) said that his country enjoyed a close and fruitful relationship with Guinea-Bissau and that his Government was proud to have been instrumental in the efforts to restore and maintain peace in that country. The establishment of a country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau was a welcome step towards ensuring durable peace, security and development there and his Government stood ready to provide any necessary assistance in that regard.

39. **Mr. Seck** (Senegal) welcomed the approach taken by the Chairperson and particularly emphasized the importance of national ownership and the need to liaise with the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau. He also agreed that it was important to identify existing projects in Guinea-Bissau in order to improve the effectiveness of the Commission's work. Such efforts were urgently required in view of the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

40. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) expressed his gratitude to the members of the Peacebuilding Commission for their words of unequivocal support for his country, which demonstrated that the Security Council had been right to establish a country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau. As a national of Brazil, a country with which Guinea-Bissau had longstanding historic and linguistic ties, the Chairperson was particularly well qualified to understand the urgent problems facing Guinea-Bissau. Her forthcoming visit to Guinea-Bissau would therefore provide a welcome opportunity for the Peacebuilding Commission to take stock of the current

situation and to assess how it should move forward. At the same time, she should work to foster cooperation between Guinea-Bissau and other countries outside the Peacebuilding Commission. It was important for her to speak openly and frankly with all stakeholders as a part of that process, including members of civil society.

41. While his country was doing its utmost to shoulder its responsibilities in terms of national ownership, success in that area would also depend on the support provided by the United Nations, particularly the Peacebuilding Commission. In that respect, he stressed that international efforts should complement existing national activities and support the bilateral and multilateral activities already under way. The ultimate goal of all such efforts was to improve living conditions in Guinea-Bissau by restoring peace and ensuring political stability. Finally, he welcomed the efforts to incorporate a gender perspective in the work of the Commission and drew attention to his country's successes in achieving gender equality.

42. **The Chairperson** welcomed all the preceding expressions of support for the work to establish a country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau and said that a common understanding had clearly been reached on how the Peacebuilding Commission should move forward.

Visit to Guinea-Bissau

43. **The Chairperson** said that she would hold consultations with a number of governmental ministers in the course of her forthcoming visit to Guinea-Bissau, including the Prime Minister. During her visit she also intended to meet the Speaker of Parliament, members of the diplomatic community, representatives of international organizations and agencies, and members of civil society. The visit would thus provide a valuable opportunity to assess the situation on the ground first-hand. She looked forward to reporting her findings to the Commission upon her return.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.